Friends of Five Creeks in 2015
It’s amazing what volunteers can do!
Here’s a taste of our work this year:

Healing the Environment Hands-On
Hands-on outdoor volunteering is the heart of Friends of Five Creeks’ work. In 2015, we led weekly “Weekday Weed Warriors,” monthly work parties for the general public, and 15 volunteer events for schools, other youth groups, and business and religious groups.

UC Berkeley students are our largest single source of volunteers. Many others are school-age or even younger. **We are proud to give these leaders of tomorrow the opportunity to experience nature, enjoy public service, and get to know their local environment and community.**

Over the years, our steady weeding and planting has improved and even transformed local natural areas: Aquatic Park, Shorebird Park, Mortar and Grotto Rock Parks, the mouths of Strawberry and Schoolhouse Creeks and nearby shoreline in Berkeley; Codornices Creek on the Berkeley-Albany border and Cerrito Creek on the Albany-El Cerrito border. It’s a joy to see some of these settle into needing little maintenance – although there will always be litter!

In 2015, we focused on the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area, Tilden Regional Park, and the Bay shore along the new Bay Trail extension in Berkeley -- plus a recent return to lower Codornices Creek. New efforts included keeping invasive Salsola – a saltwater cousin of tumbleweed – out of Berkeley’s Aquatic Park and tackling a big patch of Algerian sea lavender near the tip of the Albany Bulb.

Informing the Community

**Bay Currents**, our fall-spring series of free talks on natural history and environmental issues, continued to flourish in 2015. Refreshments and the warm, welcoming St. Alban’s Parish Hall complement the fascinating and expert speakers. Our exciting spring 2016 schedule ranges from undersea sound to Delta challenges to a panel of young climate researchers!
We do many other things to inform and engage the public:

- **Our tables with fun games and informative posters** and handouts, at places like the Bay Festival at Shorebird Park and El Cerrito’s July 4 Festival.
- We publish **handouts and flyers on timely topics** – like our new “Getting Ready for El Nino.” Check it out on our web site now!
- We design and install beautiful interpretive signs. In partnership with the Albany Community Foundation, **we are replacing damaged interpretive signs on the Bay Trail in Albany.**
- Our **monthly e-newsletter** continues to add subscribers and expand its coverage of Bay Area environmental news, profiles of fascinating native species, and events of sister organizations.
- **Our monthly walks for ages 50+** introduce seniors to easy-to-reach local natural treasures. They also promote health. Other events have themes – for example, our Moth Night and the wildflower walk we led for the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area Festival.

**Working with Agencies**

As an independent partner, we can work productively with public agencies.

- With our help, **Albany and El Cerrito have established new practices for mowing and maintenance.** The goal is established policies that maintain biodiversity while minimizing flood and fire risk.
- We worked successfully with Albany and UC Berkeley to establish better policies and practices to **keep trash out of lower Codornices Creek.**
- Our comments lead to significant improvements to documents like the El Cerrito Urban Greening Plan.

**Helping with Regional Initiatives**

A hallmark of F5C’s volunteering is helping with regional efforts.

- In 2015, we continued to lead King Tides walks and encourage others to contribute to this regional database of photos showing a future of rising tides.
- We again organized the largest number of volunteers for the yearly local **Sudden Oak Death “blitz” survey,** part of an effort that goes beyond the Bay Area.
- Monthly **walks to map invasives in Tilden Regional Park,** using **CalFlora’s cell-phone apps,** have trained novices and have stimulated other groups and agencies to use these tools. The work contributes to CalFlora’s statewide database and understanding of natives and invasives statewide. And the mapping is helping us curb new problem weeds, like stinkwort in the restored Berkeley Meadow!

**Will you help Friends of Five Creeks continue to help the environment?**

- Donate by mail or online at www.fivecreeks.org.
- Sign up for our e-newsletter at www.fivecreeks.org.
- Join us at upcoming events, listed at www.fivecreeks.org!